



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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***BORDER SHERIFFS JOIN NAPOLITANO, CALL FOR RELEASE OF
BORDER SECURITY FUNDING
Funding Remains Stuck in a Federal 'Bureaucratic Morass'***

PHOENIX - Governor Napolitano today hand-delivered a letter from Arizona's four border sheriffs to U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Michael Chertoff. The letter urges DHS to immediately release \$15 million in emergency funding appropriated by Congress through Operation Stonegarden for state and local law enforcement to help deter illegal immigration and address border-related crimes.

On May 15, 2006 President Bush issued an emergency supplemental to the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Initiative providing emergency resources to protect the international border. Although Congress approved this direly needed funding, it has not been released to the Border States and communities and instead has languished at the federal level.

Last week, Governor Napolitano criticized the Bush Administration for its delay in a letter she co-signed with Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio. Now, Arizona's four border county sheriffs have joined the Governor in urging DHS to end the delay and release the funds that Congress appropriated months ago.

"Operation Stonegarden is a proven program to successfully reduce border-related crime by helping local border law enforcement deter illegal immigration and increase security for Arizonans who live in these border communities," said Governor Napolitano. "But, this funding is useless if it remains mired in a bureaucratic morass. Each day this critical funding is delayed is a day too late."

In 2004 and 2005, Arizona appropriated \$822,000 for previous phases of Stonegarden, which is federally funded. In a four-month period, the increased law enforcement presence along the border resulted in 536 arrests (including 79 felony arrests), 31 recovered vehicles, 6,515 pounds of marijuana seized, \$16,000 in US currency seized, and 1,871 illegal immigrants turned over to U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Border Patrol. Arizona has committed an additional \$800,000 in funding to Stonegarden for 2006 to pay overtime to local law enforcement to increase police presence at suspected crossing points.

Although Arizona remains one of the top illegal crossing points in the nation, border security efforts introduced under the leadership of Governor Napolitano have had a significant impact on reducing border crime. These efforts have deterred illegal crossers and increased the ability of law enforcement to stop illegal drugs from entering Arizona.

A copy of the sheriffs' letter to Secretary Chertoff is attached.